

## Don't Fumble: Tackle Drunk Driving Before the Clock Starts

Kickoff for one of America's favorite pastimes is almost ready to start. For many football fans, when it's time for Super Bowl LII, everyone's a fan ... and *Fans Don't Let Fans Drive Drunk*.

Local highway safety and law enforcement officials are huddling up with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) for a special *Fans Don't Let Fans Drive Drunk* reminder to urge football fans across the nation not to drop the ball on this issue.

In all states, drivers are considered alcohol-impaired if they have a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher. Drunk driving can be deadly, and even small amounts of alcohol can impair judgement to make driving unsafe. In 2016, there were 10,497 fatalities in motor vehicle traffic crashes involving drunk drivers. Among the 10,497 alcohol-impaired-driving fatalities, 67 percent (7,052) were in crashes where at least one driver had a BAC of .15 — almost twice the legal limit. Texas had 1,438 alcohol-related vehicle fatalities in 2016.

Be sure to have a game plan for the night, allowing friends and family to know who the designated driver is. "We want to encourage folks to turn over their keys to a sober driver — our vote for game MVP — before they begin drinking," said Texas A&M AgriLife Extension. "Drunk driving can result in serious crashes, injuries or death. If you don't have an MVP to make sure folks get home safely, consider other ride options."

There are many other ways to ensure a safe ride home besides relying on a friend. The options include using public transportation, calling a taxi, or using a rideshare program.

In addition, NHTSA's *SaferRide* mobile app is another resource to help fans who have been drinking find a sober ride home. The app can identify their location and help to call a taxi or a friend to pick them up.

Designated sober drivers should be sure to carry the ball and refrain from drinking alcohol. This Super Bowl weekend, be a team player and help keep impaired drivers from getting behind the wheel. Don't fumble! Designate your sober driver before the big game begins. And remember: *Fans Don't Let Fans Drive Drunk*.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's *Watch UR BAC* program advises Super Bowl fans planning on attending a party, or watching the game at a sports bar or restaurant:

- If you don't have a designated driver, then ask a sober friend for a ride home — or call a cab/rideshare service, another friend, or relative, to pick you up. If you are at a friend's house, stay the night.
- Never let friends drive if they have had too much to drink.

If you're hosting a Super Bowl party:

- Make sure all your guests have a non-drinking driver to take them home, or arrange for alternate transportation to see that they get home safely.
- Serve plenty of food and non-alcoholic drinks at the party.
- Host your party just like they do at the stadium: Stop serving alcohol at the end of the third quarter of the game, and begin serving coffee and dessert.
- Take the keys away from anyone who has had too much to drink.
- Remember: You can be held liable and prosecuted if someone you served ends up in a drunk-driving crash.

Source: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's *Watch UR BAC* program is funded by TxDOT and is provided at no charge to promote alcohol awareness, the dangers of impaired driving, and friends watching out for friends. Contact: Laura Mooney, [ldmooney@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:ldmooney@ag.tamu.edu), for booking information.

Also, for more information contact the local Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service office at 903-473-4580 or visit us at [rains.agrilife.org](http://rains.agrilife.org). We are also on Facebook at [Facebook.com/pages/Rains-County-Family-](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Rains-County-Family-)

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